

October 13, 2008

When we passed the Emergency Economic Stabilization Act, there were some people who thought that the plunging stock market would immediately start rising again, that home foreclosures would stop, and that everything would be right with the world. Those of you who have been following this situation or reading my newsletters, however, knew that passing the bill was only the beginning of a long process to get us out from under the credit crisis.

Over the past week, we have seen a taste of how scared the markets are and how necessary government action is. Remember, the Secretary of the Treasury has not yet implemented the Troubled Asset Relief Program, so banks are still carrying the toxic securities. We have seen, then, the problems we have already discussed: banks too scared to lend to each other or to business; businesses, as a result, unable to make the purchases they need; layoffs. The good news is that, since the British began implementing a program similar to the equity-purchasing aspect my colleagues and I insisted be inserted into Secretary Paulson's plan, we have already seen some positive results. After Friday's G7 summit of the world's leading industrial nations, the Secretary announced that he would embrace this aspect for the United States. Starting a process as massive as our relief program takes time, but the Treasury is working as swiftly as prudence allows.

In the interim, the House is not sitting idle. Just last week, we began a series of hearings to investigate both how we got into this mess and what it means for you. On Monday, the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform questioned Richard Fuld, the former Chairman and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Lehman Brothers. Committee Chairman Waxman and his colleagues probed into flawed business models and risky behavior, and searched for possible criminal malfeasance. On Tuesday, the Committee did the same with former CEOs of AIG. These were only the first of several hearings into the failed investment banks. You can listen to the hearings and learn more at [the committee's website](#).

Tuesday also saw testimony before [the Committee on Education and Labor](#) on the effects the financial crisis has had on the retirement savings of Americans. The report was not pleasant. Over the past 15 months, Americans have lost more than \$2 trillion. That number is staggering, and it puts into perspective the size of the stabilization effort. It will take a great effort on the part of your government to recover and to protect your savings. I want you to know that I am dedicated to seeing that done.

Upcoming weeks will see meetings between House Democratic Leadership and our nation's leading economists, to determine what we can best do to help. The Financial Services, Budget, and Agriculture Committees will each hold hearings on how Congress will oversee the rescue effort, to ensure that your money is well spent. The Committee on Oversight and Government Reform will hold more hearings to probe the causes of the crisis, including looking at the roles played by credit rating agencies, the Federal Reserve, the Treasury, and the Securities and Exchange Commission.

These are difficult times that we are facing. We have a rough road ahead. But I want you to know that your Congress is acting. We may have adjourned, but don't let anyone tell you that we think our work is done for the year. My colleagues and I have a duty to protect your

interests, and we do not take that responsibility lightly.

As we go forward, there are many services in San Antonio that can help you get through your specific difficulties. If you are having trouble paying your mortgage or rent, or if you need help with credit counseling, the [City of San Antonio's Community Initiatives Department](#) may be able to help and are available at (210) 207-5910.

If you are experiencing problems with debt, you can contact the [Consumer Credit Counseling Service of San Antonio](#) at (210) 979-4300.

The Hope for Homeowners Program, which we passed into law in July and which I have mentioned before, went into effect on October 1. If you meet the criteria, the Federal Housing Authority will work with your loan servicer to help you refinance your mortgage to a 30-year, fixed rate mortgage so you can keep your home. You can learn more at <http://www.hud.gov/hopeforhomeowners/> or by calling HUD's San Antonio office at (210) 475-6806. If you are having difficulties, don't wait to seek mortgage relief. You can determine your eligibility for mortgage assistance right now. More information is available through any of these options:

- \* Contact your current lender or loan servicer;
- \* Contact a local, HUD-approved housing counseling agency at [HUD.gov](http://HUD.gov) ;
- \* Contact the [HOPE NOW Alliance](#) at 1 (888) 995-HOPE; or
- \* Call the [Federal Housing Authority](#) at 1 (800) CALL-FHA.

And remember, my staff is always here to help you. You can send any questions you might have through my [web site](#) or by calling (210) 472-6195.